

A SERMON,
PREACHED
IN
THE CHAPEL AT STOURPORT,

The 26th of February, 1797,

ON
THE DEATH
OF
MRS. WRIGHT,
OF THAT PLACE.

BY JONATHAN CROWTHER.



A Woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised.—SOLOMON.



Worcester,
PRINTED AT THE HERALD OFFICE, BY T. HOLL,
1797.

A SERMON

PREACHED

THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN

ON THE 14th DAY

OF THE MONTH OF

THE YEAR 1800

BY

THOMAS WILSON

OF THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN

NEW-YORK

PRINTED BY

JOHN W. WILSON

AT THE SIGN OF THE

WINDMILL

IN NASSAU ST.

NEW-YORK

1800

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PREFACE.

AS this Sermon was not written till after it was preached, it can hardly be expected, that it should, in every particular, be precisely the same. Of so long a discourse, delivered after but little premeditation, it would be impossible to recollect every word, and the place and order in which they were uttered: But I have given the same sentiments throughout: the ideas are arranged exactly in the same order; and the style, and manner of expression, are generally much the same. Where I have made alterations or additions, it is where I judge them to be improvements. The Sermon, and its Author, have great need of the friendship and kind allowances of Candour. I wish it had been better: but such as I have, give I unto the Reader.

JON. CROWTHER.

MARCH 6, 1797.

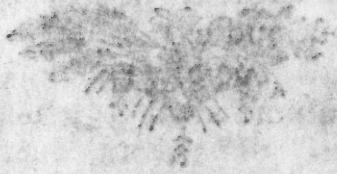


LETTER

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JOHN CROWTHER

MARCH 6, 1800



S E R M O N.

I PETER i. 24, 25.

All Flesh is as Grass, and all the Glory of Man as the Flower of Grass. The Grass withereth, and the Flower thereof falleth away: But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

THE Text is a quotation of the Apostle, with small alterations and additions, from *Isa.* xl. 6, 7, 8. The words are a beautiful figurative description of the frailty and short-livedness of human nature, and all that is most beautiful, most attracting, and most esteemed, belonging to it. Like grass, the body of man, came originally from the ground; and like it, grows up gradually, but is sure to be short-lived.—*The grass withereth*, and in this respect, *all flesh is as grass.* *And all the glory of man is as the flower of the field.* The glory (or, the goodliness, as *Isaiah* expresses it), may signify beauty, wealth, wisdom, and extraordinary qualifications. These things are generally held in high estimation; but they “consume away as it were a moth fretting a garment.” Therefore, says the Scripture, “Let not the rich man glory in his riches, the wise

man in his *wisdom*, or the mighty man in his *might*." These things, while they continue, are but poor insufficient sources of happiness; and especially, poor grounds to build upon for future and durable happiness; for what are they? and, what is their amount? Of those which most powerfully attract, and most strongly allure, it may be said,

" Or, worn by slowly-rolling years,
Or, broke by sickness in a day,
The fading glory disappears,
The short-liv'd beauties die away."

We cannot, therefore, too often meditate upon what the Apostle says, 1 Cor. vii. 27, 28, 29, *The time is short; it remains that they that have wives be as though they had none; they that weep as though they wept not; they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not, &c. &c. for the fashion of this world passeth away; or as it might be, perhaps, more properly rendered, this fashion of, or, this shadow of a world, passeth away.*—While the world, and the things thereof continue, and while we continue in the world, and are capable of being affected by them, they are rather *shadows* than *substantial realities*; and ere long, even the *shadows will vanish away*. For *What is our life?* It is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.—It is but a vapour while it continues, and even this vapour soon vanisheth away.

But is there, then, nothing substantial and durable; but is man doomed inevitably to walk in a vain shadow, and to disquiet himself in vain?" Blessed be God, it is not so: we are not left to stumble upon the *dark mountains*, and to weary ourselves with following our own devices and imaginations. He has sent out his Light and his

Truth: We are blessed with the sacred volume, the Bible; he has given us his "*Word*." And this Word, containing especially "the Gospel which is preached unto you," is not a temporary dispensation, or containing transient doctrines, but they endure the same, the same invariably, and that for ever.—He, therefore, who by Grace, makes it his leading concern, to have his heart and life conformed to that Word, lives for Eternity: And he who draws his comforts, not from sin, and vanities; not from the world, but from that peace, that joy, and that hope, which are the never-failing portion of those who are, inwardly and outwardly, conformed to *the word of the Lord*, and who have experienced *the gospel which is preached unto you*, to be *the power of God unto salvation*, build for happiness upon a foundation which *endureth for ever*.—But they whose sinful dispositions and habits, or, inordinate attachments to the things of world, practically disregard the word of the Lord; lose that sterling happiness which the righteous possess in this world, and, which is durable, yea, *endureth for ever*; and plunge themselves into misery which will continue to eternity.

The word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. The Gospel contains *the whole counsel*, or revelation of God to the children of men. It preaches to us, not only the *fall* and the general depravity of the human race, but directs us to the *balm in Gilead*, and the *Physician there*, that *the health of our souls may be recovered*. It directs the *blind* to a glorious and everlasting *Light*; the *dead* to present and everlasting *Life*; the *guilty* to a

present *Pardon* and everlasting *Righteousness*; the *weak* to all-sufficient and everlasting *Strength*: in short, it displays before, and invites the blind, guilty, unholy, perishing children of wrath, to wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and invites them to “flee for refuge to the hope that is set before them,” to Jesus the *stronghold, the city of refuge, the sure foundation, the rock of ages*.

This same word of the Lord, sets before us life and death, present and everlasting happiness and misery; fully and particularly describing the way to each, with the losses and gains, the advantages and disadvantages on the right hand and on the left. It declares religion, (or employing all our powers and faculties to the glory of God) to be “*a reasonable service*.” And God calls upon us “*to reason*,” to *count the cost*; to come to a determination, and to *chuse this day whom we will serve*.—He has positively assured us, that we *cannot serve two masters*.

The scripture does not deny that we may find some pleasures (such as they are) in sin and vanity. But what then? These pleasures are but such as beasts and devils enjoy in common with the sinner. The pleasures derived from the gratifications of the senses and appetites of the body, are equally enjoyed by the beasts of the field: and if man enjoys any pleasure from the indulgence of pride, the harbouring of envy, hatred, malice, &c.; the general spirit and practice of ungodliness; afflicting the righteous; or the labouring to draw them from the paths of piety and righteousness; or from practising deceit or wickedness in general; be it known unto him, that as the devil is more than his equal in these

branches of wickedness, so he has a more abundant chance of enjoying what pleasures may be derived from them. And the Sinner himself could declare (if, after considering the subject, he would make an honest confession) that neither the pleasures of sin ; that neither the immoderate *use*, (or rather the scandalous *abuse*) of the good things of this world, nor any thing which men count good or great, can render the capacious immortal spirit of man truly and durably happy. To make a soul truly happy, it must have enjoyments of the same nature with itself ; large enough to fill its vast capacity ; and that, like itself, will *endure for ever*. But while the sinner would fain fill his belly with the “ husks which the swine do eat,” nothing gives unto him the felicity which he so eagerly pants after.—And the pleasures of sin are but for a *season*, and a very *short* season indeed.

Moreover, they are followed by guilt and remorse. This must be the case, till such time as they have sinned away their day of grace, and are given up to a reprobate mind : till then, conscience will, at times, at least, sting and chastise them ; yea, sometimes lash them as with whips and scorpions. And the sinner is often followed by fears and painful apprehensions of the consequences of his follies and iniquities, even as to the present world. At any rate, he is under the divine displeasure : for, *God is angry with the wicked every day*. He has pronounced such, “ *Cursed in their basket and in their store, &c.*” Yea, “ *in whatsoever they set their hand unto.*” And though they may seem to *flourish as a green bay tree*, even that prosperity may, in the end, prove their greatest curse. Adversity often brings a man to serious reflection ; but prosperity adds fuel to the evil propensities of

the wicked, and often greatly stimulates them in adding sin to sin, till they have filled up the measure of their iniquities. But let it go with them as it may, in the present world, we are assured, from the unerring word of truth, that hereafter, they *cannot escape the damnation of hell*; but must be *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*. "If ye sow to the flesh, ye shall of the flesh reap corruption." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." In other words, if we live to the world, the flesh and the devil, we must expect our end and future state to be accordingly. I have no great opinion of death-bed repentances: and I think very little in their favour can be found in the bible. I believe some few have found mercy and salvation upon their dying bed, who, till then, had lived without hope, and without God in the world. But I believe such instances have not been very numerous, but very rare. It is an exception to God's general plan of acting.—And, alas! have we not great reason to believe that those awful words in the first chapter of *Proverbs* are often verified, and mournfully exemplified in the death of sinners. "*Because I have called, and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hand, and ye have not regarded, I will laugh at your calamities, I will mock when your fear cometh, &c.*" But further: this same word of the Lord, which by the Gospel is preached unto us, admits, and forewarns us, that if we follow after holiness; that if we *flee from the wrath to come*; and determine to find our way to a better world, and to *lay hold on everlasting life*, we may lay our accounts with having to *pass through tribulation*. So it has ever been; and so it is now,

though some experience it more abundantly than others. Some seem to be dandled upon the knees of Providence, while others are particularly called to *pass through deep waters*. And, *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*. But what then? Soon, very soon, *persecution*, and every trial of the righteous, will come to a conclusion—they will soon be over, to return no more: and while they continue, they are rather desirable than dreadful; and he who suffers for righteousness sake, is rather to be envied than pitied. So thought the Apostles; who, after they had received a scourging, went away “rejoicing, that in the behalf of Christ, they were counted worthy, not only to believe on his name, but also to suffer for his sake.” And what angel would not rejoice to have an opportunity of shewing his love and faithfulness to God, and of increasing his glory and happiness in Heaven, by suffering a little for well-doing? Righteous suffering produces present delight. Hence, says the Apostle, “We glory in tribulation, &c.” And another Apostle says, “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,” or afflictions. The enjoyments, the real pleasures of the righteous, are often much greater, even in their deepest afflictions, than those of the wicked, in the zenith of their sinful pleasures; and they experience that “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.” By the over-ruling Providence and blessing of God (their all-sufficient and perpetual friend) they find that “all things work together for good to them that love God.” The combined schemes of the malice and craft of earth and hell, are, by the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, over-ruled and turned to their advantage.

All this, and much more, *the word of the Lord, which endureth for ever, and which by the Gospel is preached unto us*, declareth respecting the righteous, and the happiness of that people "whose God is the Lord." And all this, even in this present evil world. But ye righteous, ye saints of the Most High, rejoice and be exceeding glad; for in addition to the goodness he displays towards you "before the sons of men," *Great is your reward in Heaven.*

"Ere long ye shall fly

"To the regions on high."

Ye shall enter the eternal rest which remaineth for the people of God; ye shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God; there ye shall meet your friends and kindred "who have departed hence in the Lord," and among the rest, our newly departed beloved friend and sister. And there, while the Lamb leads you to fountains of living water, God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.—O, thrice happy meeting! where neither pain, nor death, nor any thing, shall ever part us more.

"There, on a green and flow'ry mount,

"Our weary souls shall sit,

"And with transporting joys recount

"The labours of our feet:

"There we shall bathe our weary soul,

"In seas of endless rest,

"And not one wave of trouble roll

"Across our peaceful breast."

There, while we recollect, how in *this* world, we were stript of our dearest earthly comforts, by *the grass withering and the flower fading*, we shall there rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," in experiencing that *the word of the Lord,*

and the glory therein promised to the righteous, *endureth for ever*. "Verily, then, there is a reward for the righteous, and for the wicked,"—and, wisdom excells folly as far as light excells darkness. For had the enjoyments and advantages of sin been infinitely greater than they are; and had the difficulties and afflictions of the righteous been infinitely greater than *they* are; yet, when we consider, that, at the end of "a few swiftly fleeting years," at the most, the one will enter eternal happiness, and the other plunge into everlasting misery, it is not less our interest than our duty, to "choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." For, TIME HOW SHORT! ETERNITY HOW LONG! *What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Before we proceed to speak particularly respecting the character of our deceased friend, let us spend a few moments in contemplating the shortness and uncertainty of life. It is chiefly with a hope of pressing these points with greater and more irresistible force upon our minds, and the minds of others, that either relations, or preachers, would determine upon making the dead the subject of public serious discourse: and may we not say, that it is one grand design of God himself, in taking away our relatives and friends, to stir us up more effectually to *prepare to meet our God*: to be ready, "having our lamps trimmed and our lights burning, as men who wait for the bridegroom, whensoever the master shall come, whether at evening, at midnight, at cock-crowing, or in the morning;" more especially, as we are assured that, *in such an hour as we think not the Son of Man*

cometh. Nay, the wisest of men, as he is called, gives us this important and serious advice, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." And experience, melancholy occurrences, and our dying friends, *preach*, and with peculiar emphasis, *enforce*, the same doctrine. Her whose loss we are now lamenting and labouring to improve, is a striking instance of the truth of this doctrine; and may especially impress us with this truth, that nothing, no, nothing whatsoever, can furnish us with a solid ground of assurance that we shall live long, or even one month, one week, or one day. Neither youth, nor health, nor strength, nor old age, nor weakness; neither carelessness, nor thoughtfulness, neither uselessness, nor usefulness, nor any thing else, can afford you the least ground for this assurance. If agreeableness—if being beloved—if being completely useful in her own proper, and not unimportant, sphere, as a wife, a mother, a mistress, &c. and in and through all these a *christian*, had been a security against death, then had our lately departed friend *not died*. No: she had been still alive:—her husband the most contented and joyful of men:—their neighbours would have continued to behold one of the most happy of couples: their children would have enjoyed one of the best of mothers: their family and friends would have continued to partake of their mutual felicity: nay, she had been now one of this congregation, and might long have called upon you saying, *Come, and let us go up unto the house of the Lord.* But, she is dead: *wherefore should we fast or weep? Can we bring her back again?* Ah, no! if we could we would; but God cannot err, and we must not choose. Yet a little while, and, if we get "our robes washed and made white in the

blood of the lamb," and are faithful unto death, *we shall go to her; but she shall not return to us.* Her eyes shall no more behold sin or sorrow; but the eyes of the disembodied spirit have already seen the King in his beauty, and beheld the land that is afar off. We shall each follow her to the grave: but are we each following her to Heaven? My friends! my brethren! my fellow mortals! seriously examine this question; particularly those of you who were intimate with, and greatly esteemed, and now greatly lament, her, whom but yesterday we committed to dust, to rise no more, till the great trumpet shall blow, and "the mortal shall put on immortality, and that which was sown in corruption, shall rise in incorruption, and be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body."

I proceed, now, to the most delicate part of this discourse; that is, to say a little respecting the character and experience of *Mrs. Wright*. In doing this, I shall strictly adhere to truth, according to the best of my judgment, and shall say nothing merely to compliment either the dead or the living.

As to the years of her life which past away before she began to make a serious profession, and to feel more particularly the necessity and importance of the *one thing needful*, and devoutly to *consider her latter end*, I shall only say, that she ranked among the first class of the innocent, agreeable, and virtuous of her sex.

Her marriage may certainly rank among the suitable, agreeable, and happy; and both she and her partner had cause to acknowledge the hand, and bless the kindness of Divine Providence in joining them together. But as he is still alive, I must refrain from saying many things which I otherwise should say.

Soon after she was married, contrary to what is too generally the case, she began to meditate upon God, eternity, her soul, the evil of sin, the necessity of holiness, &c. more seriously than she had ever done before. The consequence was, that she began in good earnest to fulfil her baptismal vow, "by renouncing the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," &c. and "to fight manfully under Christ's banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil."

She determined, that whatever others did, she would serve the Lord, along with her husband, and accompany him in the narrow path that leads to glory. O! happy resolution! and O! happy fruits! She was not like the person mentioned by our Saviour, who when invited to the Gospel Supper, urged his being lately married as the reason why he could not possibly come. And her husband, instead of being afflicted with a reviler, or persecutor, or a grievous hindrance in the *good way*, was blessed with a help meet for him.

Some, perhaps, who witnessed her, when, like Moses, she resolved, to *choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*, instead of applauding her, and rejoicing at the sight, might be displeased, and may be, might be inclined to despise and ridicule her. And some might, perhaps, be found, who were ready to urge, "It is time enough yet, to think of religion, and another world;" and who might wish to persuade her to indulge a while longer in vanity, thoughtlessness, and worldly pleasures; and who might argue, that it would be soon enough to think of these things, ten, twenty, or thirty years hence. Possibly some who are here to-night, might at that time, think that it was a great pity that such a fine agreeable per-

Ton should be lost to the world (as some express it) and to gay company and amusements, and employ her vacant hours in serious reading and prayer, in hearing that Gospel, which she found to be "the power of God unto salvation," and in joining with those who feared and worshipped God, in such other ordinances as she found to be edifying and profitable. So some of you might then think; but what do you think now? Now, that she has left the world, with an hope full of immortality? How different must have been her situation if she had had her religion to seek upon her death-bed, and had had to be afflicted with the bitter remembrance of her having turned a deaf ear to the calls of the Gospel and the Divine Spirit, and of having said to serious impressions, as Felix said to Paul, "Go your way for this time, and when I have a more convenient season, (when I can be religious without self-denial, or taking up any cross, with every person's consent and approbation,) &c. then I will give full attention and obedience to these things."—She does not now repent of having given way to serious thoughtfulness while so young, and of having endeavoured to square her life by the dictates of reason and grace. Believe me, she is not sorry for having watched and prayed, and having remembered it was appointed unto her to die, and after that to be judged.—And those of you who once were inclined to blame her, now, I presume, see the subject in a different light; and though your esteem might be lessened for a short season, it is now returned and enlarged, and rests upon a solid and durable foundation.

Were I to attempt to delineate her character, I would say, she was favoured with what we call a good natural disposition, before that grace of

God that bringeth salvation, and the power of Godliness, were grafted upon it. Such a disposition is no small felicity either to the possessor, or to those who are closely connected with such a person. It gives a set off, and adds a beauty to the native beauty of Holiness—especially when it is (as it was in her) joined with good sense;—and the beauty is still more increased, when that good sense is followed up with a proper portion of modest silence, with meekness and gentleness; and where ostentation, talkativeness, and more particularly, tale-bearing, back-biting, &c. are far removed. Herein she shone with considerable lustre, and was a pattern to her sex. In her behaviour, you might behold genuine Courtesy, joined with ease, simplicity, and godly sincerity. And you might see, that in all her behaviour towards, and concerns with, whatever rank or description of persons, she exactly knew, and with perfect propriety, filled her place. This is no small excellency, especially in a mistress of a family. Indeed, in whatever point of view you survey her as a *mistress of a family*, she truly excelled. Here the difficulty is, not what to say, but what to leave unsaid. There you might behold, hospitality without prodigality; frugality without the most distant approach towards niggardliness; elegance without the least pomp or parade; and cleanliness and comfort were diffused throughout her dwelling. You beheld in her a living comment upon that advice of the Poet,

“ Let thy mind’s sweetness have its operation,
Upon thy person, cloaths, and habitation.”

I believe there is not one bible, or necessary qualification of a wife, or housewife, which she did not possess. In this respect, especially, she

possessed, "whatsoever is lovely or of good report."

"She was—but words are wanting to say what;
Think what a wife *should* be, and she was that!"

But, great as these excellencies are, and largely as she possessed them, I should have thought it a profanation of the Pulpit, to have preached a Funeral Sermon for her, if she had not possessed that *pearl of great price*, infinitely more valuable; I mean true religion, the *power* as well as the *form* of godliness. But I believe those of you, who possessed the advantages for acquiring a true knowledge of her character will admit, that she was a sincere, sterling, uniform, experimental, and practical Christian; without abounding in words, profession, or external appearances; leaving you rather to find out her piety by her general uniform temper and practice, than by making a showy exhibition of it upon the surface.

She steered clear of extremes. As a professor of religion she was not like Jonah's gourd; she did not grow up in a night, and perish in a night; she did not glare and glitter, like a blazing star, and then "sink extinguished as a comet's blaze." Her care was rather to build *firm* than *fast*. She did not soar aloft with waxen wings, and then drop and be dashed to pieces. She might, perhaps, have advanced faster; but she never turned back; never looked behind her; nor ever indulged, or felt a wish, for the flesh-pots of Egypt, the vanities she had renounced and left behind. She kept advancing, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of her Lord and Saviour, though silently, and, almost imperceptibly.

Let it be remarked, also, that she was not one of those professors of religion, who are some-

times almost consumed with zeal, and sometimes cold and languid: she neither drove furiously like *Jehu*, nor followed afar off, like a falling *Peter*. She was still the same; and still walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

After what has been said, it might be deemed superfluous to say, that she was what she ought to be, as a relation; whether as a *child*, a *sister*, or a *wife*. This is a substantial essential branch of true religion, and there can be no true christianity where it is wanting.

Lastly, she was not only a good neighbour, but a good *member* of a *christian society*. She gave no trouble, and brought no reproach. The members of the same society were not ashamed of her *when they spoke with their enemies in the gate*. And she was a *daughter of Peace*. Happy would it be for every *Christian Church*, if all the members thereof were, herein, like her.

We come now to the closing scene; the scene sadly painful to her friends, and heart-rending to her husband; but to her, the gate to endless peace and glory.

Her death was suitable to her life; and exactly such an one as might have been expected. She had no fear, and yet no extatic triumph.

Extatic enlargement, and triumphant joy, are not *promised* to us in our dying moments; nor are they at all *necessary* proofs of a well-grounded hope of eternal happiness. And if they are, at any time, found in persons reduced to extreme weakness, and racked with extreme pain, (especially in persons of a calm, sedate complexion) it is something supernatural; it is little less than miraculous. The bible informs us of many who died in peace: but of how many who died in triumphant delight? Old Simeon, only prayed

that he might depart in *Peace*. But who can die in *peace*, (except such as are hardened or deceived) except they are possessed of the smile of God, and the testimony of a good Conscience; especially those who lie for weeks suspended between time and eternity, and possessing the full use of their reason, as was the case with Mrs. Wright? And her chief concern was, to discover, "what by Sin she was, and what she was by Grace;" and to be made *perfect and entire, wanting nothing*.

She was ill near a month: much of that time she had some apprehensions she *might* die of the affliction, but was not *particularly* apprehensive of it till near the last. And when she was made sensible of it, she was not alarmed. Death had no sting. For the day before her death, she said to Mr. Wright, that "she blessed God, she had no distressing fears throughout her illness; and now only wanted a brighter foretaste of Glory."

And on the same day, having asked a pious friend, "what she thought of her?" and who answering, "I think the Lord is about to take you;" "then, said she, pray that the Lord may fully perfect what is lacking in my soul, and then I am fully resigned to his will." Still she had no fear. The painful hours after this, prior to her dissolution, all her little strength and breath, and all her faculties, were employed in prayer and praise. All was peace within, and she repeatedly prayed, "Lord come quickly, and take me to thyself." And two or three hours before her death, she cried out, "Glory be to his great and glorious name for all his kind dealings towards me." After this her desire of dissolution appeared more ardent: and while a pious friend, who sat

up with her, afterwards prayed with her, her heart was earnestly engaged, and appeared still more comfortable, and more desirous of going hence : and then, with the greatest ease and tranquillity, she

“ Clapt the glad wing, and tower’d away,
 “ And mingled with the blaze of day.”

And,

“ Thus may we all our parting breath,
 “ Into the Saviour’s hands resign ;
 “ O Jesus ! let me die her death,
 “ And let her latter end be mine.”

Nothing now remains to be said more, but a few words, by way of ADDRESS to *Relations acquaintance*, and the *Congregation* at large. But I pause, when I should address the relations of the deceased, especially him whose heart bleeds most upon the occasion. Nothing that I can say, even from the Bible itself, will reach the bottom of the wound, stop its bleeding, and cause “ *fighting grief to weep no more.*” Yet I must say, *sorrow not as them who have no hope for her who sleeps in Jesus.* Did she see you, and could you hear her voice, it would be, *weep not for me, but weep for yourselves.* By her death, you have one less tie to earth, and one more inducement to make you desirous and careful to get to Heaven.

“ Follow after she cries, as she mounts to the skies—
 “ Follow after your friend,
 “ To the blissful enjoyment which never shall end.”

Either she or you must have been called away first ; and Infinite Wisdom and Goodness thought meet to take her the first. Labour to say with Job (and to feel what you say) *The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.* You are still in a world of danger, while

she is safe landed where temptation and danger can never enter. Take care, O ye her relations, ONE and ALL, that this late separation, which death has made, be not an everlasting one. O! make sure of heaven. To this end, follow her as she followed Christ.

The same would I say to her dear and intimate acquaintance, who all loved her. Learn of her to *die*, by learning of her to *live*.

And to this whole congregation, I would say, BE YE ALSO READY; for death may come for you when you little expect it; and the time may be near. The grim messenger may even now be approaching you, and the timber be cut down and sawed of which your coffins will be made.— And alas for you! if you have your religion to seek, and your peace to make with God, when you are enfeebled, racked with pain, and when your soul is hastening to quit the body; or, rather, to attempt to obtain a preparation, without being able to obtain it: like *Esau*, who found no place for repentance though he sought it carefully with tears; or like the Foolish Virgins, who, though their eyes were open to see, and their hearts wrought upon to feel their true situation, and even *went to buy oil* (sought to obtain grace) did not obtain an entrance where the Bridegroom was.

“ Life is the time to serve the Lord ;

“ The time to ensure the great reward.”

But who are they who are truly prepared for death? Surely not those who are living in outward iniquities. These, times without number, are declared in the Bible to be in the high road to eternal misery. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all who forget God.* The knowledge of God; the love of God; and the true spiritual worship of Him, are, in *the word of the Lord, which endureth*

for ever, laid down as essentially necessary to a preparation for the enjoyment of heaven.

We must consider what our Saviour says, *Mat. v. 20. Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And their righteousness implied being free from outward sin; a constant attendance upon the ordinances of God; making a good use of their property, &c. But our righteousness must be *inward* as well as *outward*; and also *spiritual, uniform, and universal*; we being at the same time possessed of true spiritual knowledge of ourselves, and also of the law of God.

And our Saviour again asserts, *John iii. that except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* And what less can this imply, than *being created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works*; or, as the Common Prayer Book expresses it, “a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.”

To these things, friends and brethren, I would crave your most serious attention: let them sink deep into your hearts. O set about it, and *seriously and instantly* become what you will wish you had been, when you come to lay upon your death-bed. I do not ask you to join us, or worship in this place; but *join yourselves unto the Lord; and become worshippers of Him in spirit and in truth*, in whatever place or form, and among whatever people you like best. Be Bible christians: serve God: and *wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* Resolve, and put your resolution in practice, and *be faithful unto death, that the Lord may give you a crown of life.* Consider these things, and may God give you understanding, grace, and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

FINIS,

